

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 IO-06 EUR-08 ARA-10 H-01  
INR-05 PM-03 PA-01 SP-02 NSC-05 ACDA-10 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 NSAE-00 NEA-07 /077 W  
-----008555 140151Z /21

R 130824Z JUL 78  
FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8993  
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO  
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 3050

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PBOR, MASS, SO, ET, US  
SUBJECT: SIAD'S PLEA TO CODEL LEGGETT FOR A MISSION TO THE OGADEN

REF: (A) MOGADISCIO 1551 (NOTAL) (B) MOGADISCIO 1565

SUMMARY: WE DO NOT BELIEVE ETHIOPIANS WOULD ACCEPT ANY SORT OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE KEEPING MACHINERY, INCLUDING THIRD COUNTRY OBSERVERS, IN THEIR DISPUTE WITH SOMALIA OVER THE OGADEN. OUR ANALYSIS OF ETHIOPIAN THINKING ON THIS SUGGESTION FOLLOWS ALONG WITH OUR SUGGESTION THAT MOST EFFECTIVE ROLE USG COULD PLAY WOULD BE TO ENCOURAGE AFRICAN MEDIATION EFFORTS IN ORDER TO KEEP THE ISSUE IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT.  
END SUMMARY.

1. PARA 3, REFTEL (A), REPORTED SOMALI PRESIDENT SIAD'S PLEA TO CODEL LEGGETT FOR A MISSION TO INVESTIGATE CONDITIONS IN WHAT HE REFERRED TO AS "WESTERN SOMALIA." REFTEL (A) ALSO NOTED THAT SIAD'S SUGGESTION MIGHT BE RELATED TO GENERAL  
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SAMANTAR'S SUGGESTION THAT THE USG SEND OBSERVERS TO THE SDR TO DETERMINE WHETHER OR NOT THE GSDR IS SUPPORTING THE INSURGENCY IN THE OGADEN.

2. REFTEL (B) SUGGESTED THAT POSSIBILITY OF THIRD COUNTRY OBSERVERS BE EXAMINED. IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN THAT CONSIDERATION, WE PROVIDE BELOW WHAT IN OUR BEST JUDGMENT WOULD

BE THE ETHIOPIAN REACTION TO THE CONCEPT.

3. ANY REQUEST THAT FOREIGN OBSERVERS UNDER UN, OAU, OR ANY OTHER SPONSORSHIP, BE POSED ON ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE REJECTED OUT OF HAND BY THE ETHIOPIANS. THIS CONCEPT WAS DISCUSSED WITH THE ETHIOPIANS IN MARCH ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS AND REJECTED BY THEM. (ADDIS ABABA 1120, 1154, 1173, 1227, ALL NOTAL) WHILE THE SITUATION HAS CHANGED SINCE THEN, WE SEE NO SIGN THAT ETHIOPIAN THINKING HAS CHANGED AT ALL. ON THE CONTRARY, WE BELIEVE THAT THEIR POSITION ON OBSERVERS WOULD BE HARDER TODAY THAN IT WAS LAST MARCH.

4. THE ETHIOPIAN POSITION ON THE QUESTION OF OBSERVERS ON ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY IS INFLUENCED BY A NUMBER OF FACTORS, INCLUDING THE FOLLOWING:

(A) AS THE PARTY AGGRESSED AGAINST, THEY WILL NOT AGREE TO ANY MOVE WHICH EVEN BY IMPLICATION WOULD DILUTE THEIR SOVEREIGNTY OVER THE HARARGHE ADMINISTRATIVE REGION (THE OGADEN) OR ADD AN IOTA OF SUPPORT TO SIAD'S USE OF "WESTERN SOMALIA" FOR INTERNATIONALLY-RECOGNIZED ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY.

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(B) THE ETHIOPIANS ARE CONVINCED THAT THE SOMALI GOV-

ERNMENT CONTROLS AND DIRECTLY SUPPORTS THE SOMALI INSURGENTS IN THE OGADEN. THEY ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE USG AND ALL OTHER INTERESTED COUNTRIES WITH AN INTELLIGENCE CAPABILITY KNOW THE SAME. INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS WOULD ADD NOTHING TO THIS BODY OF KNOWLEDGE AND TO THE EXTENT THEY DID NOT PROVE SOMALI GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO THE INSURGENTS, THEY WOULD SERVE TO SUBSTANTIATE SOMALI CLAIMS OF NONINVOLVEMENT. THE LENGTH OF THE OGADEN'S FRONTIER AND THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF CONTROLLING IT EFFECTIVELY FURTHER UNDERMINE ETHIOPIAN INTEREST IN OBSERVERS.

(C) THE CONCEPT ITSELF OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS IS LOOKED UPON WITH SUSPICION AS A WESTERN PLOY, WHICH AS NOTED IN (B) ABOVE HAS NO USEFUL PURPOSE FOR THE ETHIOPIANS. THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT IS, AS AN UNDERSTATEMENT, NOT USED TO TRYING TO MAKE A CASE ON ITS BEHALF BEFORE WORLD PUBLIC OPINION. GIVEN  
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THE PRESENT STATE OF SUSPICIONS AND EMOTIONS HERE, THE ETHIOPIANS WOULD BE APT TO REGARD ANY INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS EVEN IN SOMALIA (REGARDLESS OF HOW THE PROPOSAL WERE PRESENTED TO THEM) AS A USG PLOY TO DAMPEN ETHIOPIAN CONCERNS SO THAT THE USG MIGHT ESTABLISH A MILITARY SUPPLY RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMALIA.

5. FACTORS (B) AND (C) IN PRECEDING PARAGRAPH WOULD APPLY EQUALLY TO INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS POSTED ON SOMALIA (OR BOTH SOMALIA AND ETHIOPIAN) TERRITORY. WERE THOSE THE FORMULAS PROPOSED, WE WOULD EXPECT THE ETHIOPIANS TO RESPOND THAT THEY WERE NOT INTERESTED AND TO REFUSE COOPERATION.

6. IN SHORT, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE ETHIOPIANS WOULD FIND A PROPOSAL FOR PEACE KEEPING MACHINERY ACCEPTABLE AS AN APPROACH TO A SOLUTION OR TO REDUCE THE PRESENT LEVEL OF FIGHTING. WE DO BELIEVE THAT IF A SOLUTION IS TO BE FOUND TO THE APPARENTLY IRRECONCILABLE ETHIOPIAN AND SOMALI POSITIONS, IT WILL COME ABOUT BY CONTINUING AFRICAN EFFORTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE TWO. THIS APPROACH, IF PURSUED STEADILY, HAS THE ADVANTAGE OF KEEPING BOTH ETHIOPIANS AND SOMALIS TUNED TO AFRICAN OPINIONS AND LOOKING IN THAT DIRECTION FOR POLITICAL ASSISTANCE AND UNDERSTANDING. IT WOULD TEND TO KEEP BOTH FROM LOOKING OUTWARDS FOR EXTRA-AFRICAN SOLUTIONS (E.G. THE SOVIET AND CUBAN PROPOSED FEDERATION OF ERITREA, ETHIOPIA, SOUTH YEMEN, DJIBOUTI AND SOMALIA). WHILE AFRICAN COUNTRIES HAVE LESS DIRECTLY AT STAKE IN THE DISPUTE, THEY ARE IN THE LONG RUN APT TO BE MORE SUCCESSFUL IN EFFECTING A SOLUTION. OUR EFFORTS MIGHT BE BETTER DIRECTED ALONG THOSE LINES THAN

BY PURSUING THE IDEA OF INTERNATIONAL OBSERVERS.

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## Message Attributes

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